



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022

Annual Report 2020



What is a Social Enterprise?

A **Social Enterprise** is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.

It pursues its objectives by **trading on an ongoing basis** through the provision of goods and/or services, and by **reinvesting surpluses** into achieving social objectives.

It is **governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner** and is independent of the public sector.

If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.

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Minister's Foreword

I am delighted to publish the first annual progress report on the implementation of the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019- 2022 covering the period up to December 2020. The first year of the Policy has seen very strong progress in terms of implementation and has been marked by a significant increase in awareness of social enterprise with momentum steadily building.

The Policy, which was launched in July 2019, was a watershed moment for social enterprise in Ireland. It was the first Government policy in the history of the State aimed at developing and realising the incredible economic, social and environmental potential of social enterprise. It was also the first policy published by the newly constituted Department of Rural and Community Development.

The National Social Enterprise Policy is a policy for a new era, which is complemented by *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A five year Strategy to Support Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024* and the National Volunteering Strategy (2021 – 2025). It seeks to create an enabling environment for social enterprise to grow, both in terms of scale and impact. This report outlines the significant progress achieved in delivering the Policy, led by my Department in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders.

Under each of the three key objectives of the Policy – Awareness. Capacity Building and Policy Coherence - there has been a number of especially noteworthy achievements. A new Awareness Strategy has been developed to highlight the critical role social enterprises play in responding to many of our current challenges such as COVID-19 and climate adaptation and to emphasise their potential to shape a more sustainable and inclusive future. The Awareness Strategy was co-created with stakeholders, and sets out an effective and achievable strategy over a two-year period. The Strategy complements other critical awareness raising efforts including the National Social Enterprise Conference which was delivered virtually in 2020 allowing very significant participation and engagement both nationally and internationally.

As with other businesses, access to capacity building and other supports is a key necessity. My Department has invested significantly to grow and strengthen social enterprise in a variety of ways including by allocating €800k for the Training and Mentoring Pilot and €2m for the Small Capital Grants Scheme, funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund. This is in addition to the Social Enterprise Development Fund (SED Fund). Significant support was also provided through the Community Services Programme (CSP), the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and LEADER. I also ensured that the necessary supports were put in place for social enterprises in response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To improve policy alignment my Department continues to collaborate on an ongoing basis across Government with a view to social enterprise being recognised for the economic, social and environmental impact they are creating which cuts across a wide range of public policy areas.

At international level, the Irish social enterprise ecosystem is rapidly gaining in prominence. My Department has actively engaged with the European Union (EU) within the framework of the Group of Experts on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES), but also with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and International Labor Organization (ILO). There is universal recognition internationally of the critical role played by social enterprises in fostering inclusive growth, and a fairer, more sustainable society. With that in mind, at the end of December 2020, I was proud to sign the Toledo Declaration on the Social Economy and Social Enterprise on behalf of the Irish Government, joining 18 other EU member states in reaffirming our commitment to the development of this critical sector.

As we approach the midway point of the Policy, our focus turns to consolidating progress by enhancing our focus on awareness raising and improving our understanding of the scale and scope of the sector, which will help to inform future policy actions.

The effectiveness of the Policy relies principally on engagement and meaningful participation with the full spectrum of social enterprise stakeholders, including support organisations and networks. I would like to thank the members of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group and Sub-Group for their commitment, oversight and input. I also wish to recognise the many social enterprise practitioners, supporters, researchers and advocates, who are supporting the development of the social economy on a daily basis throughout the country.

I would like to thank the many social enterprises who showed their true value in their significant contribution to the Community Call initiative in the course of 2020 and wish them every success in the future as society and the economy reopens. When our social enterprises thrive, society benefits.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the role of my Officials in supporting this new phase of development of social enterprise in Ireland.

Heather Humphreys TD

Minister for Rural and Community Development

December 2020

1. Introduction

Published in July 2019 by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), the first National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019 – 2022 was launched with the vision of supporting the growth and impact of social enterprise in Ireland. Along with defining what it means to be a social enterprise in an Irish context, the policy is focussed on three key objectives;

1. Building Awareness of Social Enterprise
2. Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise
3. Achieving Better Policy Alignment

The importance of social enterprise was again recognised in the 2020 Programme for Government, which commits to building upon the ongoing work implementing National Social Enterprise Policy.¹ To support this crucial work DRCD has continued to engage with stakeholders in Government and across the social enterprise ecosystem to develop a wider public understanding of social enterprise and to support the diversity of social enterprise organisations in reaching their potential.

Convened in December 2019, the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group has been instrumental in overseeing and advising on the overall implementation of the policy. DRCD would like to extend its thanks to all members of the Implementation Group for their input and commitment, especially Dr Senan Cooke for his crucial efforts early in the Policy's development and implementation.

Since the Policy's publication, the context within which social enterprises have had to operate has changed dramatically. Along with the rest of the world, Ireland has been working to address the significant challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. This radical shift in operating conditions has proven to be both a serious challenge and an unprecedented opportunity for social enterprise. The essential role they play in our communities has been repeatedly demonstrated, helping to shorten supply chains of essential goods and services and, more recently, playing an indispensable role on the front line of response as part of the Community Call Initiative.

Despite the effect COVID-19 and other pressing challenges including climate change have had on society and the economy, focus remains on the main objectives of the policy which are arguably more relevant than ever. As the OECD Report 'Social economy and the COVID-19 crisis: current and future roles' highlights, social enterprises can contribute to creating a

¹<https://assets.gov.ie/94092/50f892b9-a93e-43fc-81d1-778ff9954d9f.pdf> pg. 92

fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable future, and their proximity to communities positions them well for shaping the post-COVID Recovery.²

Report Structure

This report details the actions undertaken to date in relation to each of the 26 policy measures since publication of the Policy.

Much of the work carried out has been done in partnership between DRCD and social enterprise stakeholders, an approach which is considered to be a critical success factor in developing a strong, vibrant and sustainable social enterprise ecosystem in Ireland.

This report details progress made on policy implementation from July 2019 to the end of 2020.

²<http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/social-economy-and-the-covid-19-crisis-current-and-future-roles-f904b89f/>

Case Study 1 - FoodCloud

A Social Enterprise working to tackle the twin issues of food waste and food security by redistributing surplus food from the food industry to a network of charity and community partners in Ireland.

Address: Broomhill Business Park, 8 Broomhill Rd, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 CD32



Motivation for establishing the Social Enterprise

Iseult Ward became interested in the concept of social enterprise through a 2012 TCD Enactus event, where she met her now FoodCloud Co-Founder Aoibheann 'O'Brien. They had a mutual determination to do something about the mountain of food being wasted in this country every year.

Through their initial research, they saw that there was an opportunity to develop a very local solution. They arranged for the surplus food from a farmers' market to be redistributed to a local charity. That initiative was the start of FoodCloud and an Irish food revolution.

Since 2013, FoodCloud's technology has enabled a community of over 9,500 charities across Ireland and the UK to access good food and create long-lasting, local relationships, tackling food waste whilst creating greater social inclusion.

Services and Goods provided

FoodCloud offers two food redistribution services to a network of over 700 community groups across Ireland:

1. Technology platform connects over 500 supermarkets directly to local community groups. The donation management system allows retailers to upload details of excess food, and local charities are notified to come and collect it daily.
2. Three warehouses in Dublin, Cork and Galway, redistributing large quantities of surplus food from the supply chain to community groups.

Age of Enterprise: 9 years

Income Range: Over €1m

Employment Range: >70, plus volunteers

2. Policy Objective One - Building Awareness of Social Enterprise

Building Awareness of Social Enterprise

Policy Measures

In implementing this Policy, the Government will work with social enterprise stakeholders to help raise awareness of social enterprise in Ireland. In particular, the Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, will:

1. Work closely with social enterprise stakeholders to develop an Awareness Strategy to raise the profile of social enterprise in Ireland.
2. Work with stakeholders to identify, profile and disseminate best practice examples of social enterprises and increase public understanding of their contribution to society and the economy.
3. Hold an annual social enterprise Conference for all stakeholders to provide networking opportunities, disseminate information, share best practice, and inform policy implementation and future policy development.

Awareness Strategy

In May 2020, a Subgroup of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group was established. That Group, which was chaired by Tammy Darcy (Shona Project & SERI), presented a Social Enterprise Awareness Raising Strategy to the Implementation Group on 15 January 2021. This work was delivered with the contracted support of DHR Communications, who hosted a workshop with the Sub-Group and assisted with the drafting of the Strategy.

In line with the national policy definition, DRCD is committed to ensuring that the full spectrum of social enterprise is reflected in a strategy that aims to promote public understanding of what social enterprises are and what sets them apart from other businesses. Detailing key messages and intending to identify case studies of best practice, the Awareness Raising Strategy aims to increase public understanding of social enterprises' contribution to society and the economy. The strategy includes a stakeholder map, which is a critical tool for communications planning and sets out the key audiences to target. It will guide DRCD's interventions and supports in this area going forward.

National Social Enterprise Conference

The National Social Enterprise Conference has been established as an annual flagship event for the National Policy, and is traditionally held on International Social Enterprise Day on the third Thursday of November each year. The event is designed to create a forum for practitioners, supporters and policy makers, including international guests, to come together to share experience and good practice and to discuss how to advance the priorities for the sector together.

In 2019, the inaugural conference was held in Croke Park, with more than 200 people representing well over 50 organisations and agencies in attendance and more than 200 people tuned in to live stream. Speakers included Julie Sinnamon, CEO of Enterprise Ireland, Gerry Higgins of the Social Enterprise World Forum, John McMullan, Chairman of Social Enterprise NI, as well as a wide range of national and local social enterprise stakeholders. Minister Michael Ring TD provided the keynote address.

In light of COVID-19, the 2020 National Social Enterprise Conference was held online, and attracted very significant engagement. More than 500 people took part in the live event on the 19th November. The agenda included a keynote address from Minister Heather Humphreys TD, a series of video showcases of different social enterprises sharing best practice, as well as a round table discussion on the conference theme of *Shaping a Sustainable, Inclusive Recovery* involving key national and international stakeholders such as the OECD's Head of the Social Economy and Innovation, Antonella Noya.

Stakeholder engagement

In addition to continuous engagement by DRCD with the whole spectrum of social enterprise stakeholders and active participation in outreach events, DRCD also partnered with others to support engagement. The Irish Social Enterprise Network (ISEN) ran a series of online networking and support events during the year, funded by DRCD. These events served to raise awareness of best practise amongst social enterprises during the pandemic, providing the opportunity to connect and share experiences. In addition, the ISEN further developed the BuySocial.ie website, the first website of its kind showcasing trading social enterprises in Ireland.

Initiating Social Enterprises

Policy Measures

Building on a number of current initiatives around social entrepreneurship and social enterprise start-ups, the Government will:

- 4.** Support social enterprise initiation and start-ups through targeted programmes and initiatives.
- 5.** Explore the scope for further inclusion of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship modules in the education and training system at all levels, and for promoting social enterprise as a viable model for entrepreneurs and social innovators.
- 6.** Work with education and research bodies to further support the development of social enterprise.

The Social Enterprise Development (SED) Fund, delivered by Rethink Ireland and supported by DRCD through the Dormant Accounts Fund, has made a significant contribution to the initiation of social enterprises. In addition, support for social enterprise initiation has been provided through the Training and Mentoring Pilot Scheme, further details of which have been included in section three under Leadership and Governance.

In 2020, DRCD initiated a collaboration with Foróige to develop a social enterprise module as part of highly successful Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programme which will be delivered in 2021. The NFTE programme, which engaged 4,000 young people in Ireland in 2020, provides an ideal opportunity to promote social enterprise as a viable model for young entrepreneurs and social innovators. Further efforts are also underway to explore areas in which social enterprise can be included in education and training systems.

DRCD is committed to advancing the social enterprise teaching and research agendas, and to supporting effective collaboration with, and between, education and research bodies. To this end, a network of social enterprise stakeholders from Irish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) was formed and two meetings of the Network took place in the reporting period. The minutes of those meetings are available on gov.ie.³ The network enables communication regarding developments and activities relating to social enterprise and the sharing of good practice in terms of teaching, research and community engagement. Furthermore, it engenders collaboration and innovation on how to support the development of social enterprise amongst network members as well as providing the opportunity to avail of expert input on pieces of work being undertaken by DRCD. DRCD also provided €3000 to support the running

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/5f196-summary-minutes-of-social-enterprise-higher-education-institute-hei-network/>

of the 7th EMES International Research network PhD Training School held virtually in UCC in October 2020 which focused on the collaborative dimensions of social enterprise.

Case Study 2 - Cottage Community Shop & Tearooms

Community based Shop & Tearooms, selling local produce, arts and crafts.

Address: Loughmore, Templemore, Tipperary



Motivation for establishing the Social Enterprise

Loughmore is a small rural community in North Tipperary, with the village situated 6 miles from Thurles and 3 miles from Templemore. It has a population of 800, with approx. 300 houses in the parish. At one stage Loughmore was a thriving community that had 7 businesses but sadly each one closed, except for one local pub

that opened in the evenings. As a result, the village was dying: In 2011 two local ladies – Maeve O’Hair & Mary Fogarty - were separately having ideas of doing something to address the situation. Maeve had been actively thinking of opening a tea room in order to create a social space in the village and Mary was thinking of reopening her parent’s grocery shop.



By chance both ladies met and shared their thoughts, which ultimately led to them coming together to set up The Cottage Loughmore social enterprise. Today it is a successfully operated sustainable business with wonderful growth potential.

Services and Goods provided

The Cottage is open 7 days a week providing a full menu – Breakfast, Lunch & Afternoon Teas using all local fresh produce & has won many awards for hospitality and food including Irish Times Best Tearooms In Ireland, and John & Sally McKenna Food Awards. The Cottage shop sells basic groceries, sweets, ice creams etc plus we offer Post Point Services & papers. It also provides a meeting space for meetings and has high speed broadband.



Age of Enterprise: 9 years
Income Range: €50,000-200,000
Employment Range: <12

3. Policy Objective Two - Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise

Leadership and Governance

Policy Measures

To improve business and leadership supports for social enterprises, the Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, will:

7. Compile and make available information on the various business supports available to social enterprises, along with details of the providers of those supports.
8. Identify any gaps which may exist in business supports available to social enterprises and work to address those gaps.
9. Provide improved access to advice and supports to assist social enterprises and social entrepreneurs - including through standard Local Enterprise Office services where appropriate - to develop their business proposals.
10. Provide tailored training for social enterprises in areas such as business planning, mentoring, leadership, governance, capacity building, financial planning and digital innovation to help them to improve their business potential as well as leadership and governance skills.

DRCD has published details on gov.ie of the business and financial supports available to social enterprises.⁴ This information is updated continually, and receives input from the Implementation Group, in order to provide a comprehensive resource.

Work is ongoing to identify and address gaps which may exist in business supports available to social enterprises. For example, DRCD is engaging on an ongoing basis across Government to ensure social enterprises have access to relevant supports and to address barriers faced by social enterprise in accessing these supports, including a number of Covid-19 related supports. Engagement in this regard, has also taken place at Ministerial level. Separately, DRCD has engaged with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Centre of Excellence regarding improving access to mainstream LEO supports for social enterprises subject to the normal conditions associated with such supports, and this will continue.

Under the Social Enterprise Measure of the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) €800k has been provided under the Training and Mentoring pilot scheme for social enterprises, providing

⁴<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/94437/76d7e367-eac2-43c6-a7f0-3fa83b2b7693.pdf#page=null>

support on topics such as business planning, leadership, governance, capacity building, financial planning and digital innovation. This scheme has supported 14 projects and benefited approximately 400 participants. In addition, through a pilot Small Capital Grants Scheme rolled out in partnership with the Irish Local Development Network, €2m of DAF funding was provided for 220 social enterprises. The scheme provided grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 for equipment, repairs or refurbishments which enabled social enterprises improve their service delivery. DRCD has allowed maximum flexibility with these programmes in view of the Covid-19 restrictions.

DRCD also provides significant support to social enterprises through a number of other programmes including the Community Services Programme (CSP), SICAP and LEADER. Other Departments also support social enterprise including the Department of Justice's KickStart programme, which aims to increase employment for people with criminal convictions.

Policy Implementation



Supports

Small Capital Grants

Delivered by **49** LDCs
€2M supported
230 social enterprises

Training and Mentoring

€800K fund delivered
by **14** training partners
400 social enterprises
benefitted

Rethink Ireland Social Enterprise Development Fund

40 awardees in 2020



Engagement

5 meetings

National Social Enterprise
Policy Implementation Group

5 meetings

Awareness Strategy Sub-Group

3 meetings

Higher Education Institutions Group

230 meetings with stakeholders

3 EU Expert Group on Social
Enterprise meetings attended



Networking

200 attended National Social
Enterprise Conference 2019

500 participated in
Online Conference 2020

335 Benefitted from **9**
ISEN support webinars

Access to Finance and Funding

Policy Measures

To improve access to finance and funding for social enterprises, and building on existing supports, the Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, will:

- 11.** Identify and catalogue the various funding schemes available to social enterprises at national and EU levels, and ensure that this information, and details of how to access the schemes, is widely available to social enterprises.
- 12.** Identify any gaps which may exist in terms of financial supports to social enterprises, including at start-up phase, and work to address those gaps.
- 13.** Explore the potential for new innovative funding schemes (repayable and non-repayable) for social enterprises, including enabling access to the EU Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) guarantee scheme for loan funding.
- 14.** Analyse and consider the potential for leveraging additional private sector investment to support the financing of social enterprises, including through philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- 15.** Explore the scope for improving alignment of funding schemes across Government Departments, where appropriate, to support the objectives of social enterprises, whilst avoiding any displacement of existing supports for Community and Voluntary organisations.

Following approval by the National Policy Implementation Group, a table has been published on gov.ie which details the business and financial supports available to social enterprises. This Supports Table will be updated and circulated to stakeholders on a regular basis.⁵ DRCD also regularly circulates information to social enterprise networks regarding new national and international support schemes.

With a view to increasing the awareness of social enterprises and driving engagement from the wider business community DRCD initiated engagement with Chambers Ireland in 2020 on the inclusion of a social enterprise partnership category within their national CSR awards.

The challenges associated with COVID-19 served to both highlight certain gaps in support for social enterprise as well as the need for additional, bespoke support to address the hardships caused by the pandemic. The €2.5m COVID-19 Emergency fund, the €50m Stability Fund, and

⁵<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/94437/76d7e367-eac2-43c6-a7f0-3fa83b2b7693.pdf#page=null>

the €5m Innovate Together fund were designed to address the needs of social enterprises as well as community and voluntary groups.

In May 2020, the Government in conjunction with Social Finance Foundation announced an additional €44 million low-cost funding from Irish banks, and €25 million in Loan Guarantees from the European Investment Fund (supported by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)), would be made available to social enterprises through the social finance lenders.

Internal discussions progressed in 2020 towards ensuring maximum impact of Departmental schemes on social enterprises without displacing existing supports for the Community and Voluntary sector. The focus of these discussions shifted to tailoring COVID-19 support schemes to include social enterprises within their scope alongside community and voluntary organisations.

Enabling market opportunities

Policy Measures

To improve access to markets for social enterprises, the Government will:

- 16.** Support capacity-building for social enterprises in relation to procurement processes through workshops and training.
- 17.** Work with stakeholders to identify how to improve opportunities for social enterprises in the business-to-business supply-chain and in public procurement.
- 18.** Through the Social Considerations Advisory Group, help policy makers to better understand how procurement can be used to facilitate the advancement of social policy objectives within appropriate and structured public procurement guidelines.

DRCD participates on the cross-government Strategic Procurement Group (formerly known as the Social Considerations Advisory Group) convened by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) which promotes and facilitates the inclusion of social considerations in public procurement projects in line with priorities set out in the 2020 Programme for Government. DRCD is actively engaging social enterprises where possible and by compiling a suppliers list of social enterprises in order to engage services and utilise products from social enterprises when possible (for example printing, catering etc). Furthermore, DRCD has begun to include specific social considerations in calls, for example the 2020 call for the provision of Sensory Facilities and Equipment in Public Libraries.

In addition, between November and December 2020 DRCD, in collaboration with the Department of Justice and Equality and Pobal, organised a series of procurement webinars to support social enterprises in becoming viable supply chain providers in the public sector procurement market. The webinars provided social enterprises with practical knowledge and skills on submitting tenders and competing for public contracts effectively, either individually or as part of a consortia-led approach. Each training session was attended by the maximum allowable 30 individuals an informational webinar was attended by approximately 85 people. This, along with the planned inclusion of social enterprise partnerships in the national business awards, will help improve opportunities in business to business supply chain and public procurement.

DRCD also provided a keynote address at the national procurement summit at the RDS in March 2020 on the topic of socially responsible public procurement and the role of social enterprises.

Legal Form

Policy Measures

The Government, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will:

19. Conduct further research and analysis on the operation of social enterprises within existing legal structures and assess the potential value of a distinct legal form for social enterprises.

Utilising a two phase approach, DRCDC has commenced work on the issue of legal structures for social enterprises in 2020. In the first phase, TrustLaw worked alongside its partner law firm Mason Hayes Curran to create a Legal Form Guide for Social Enterprise. This guide,⁶ which is also available in Irish,⁷ was published on the 19th November 2020 and provides an overview of the various types and requirements of the different legal forms which social enterprises can use.

The second phase was undertaken in collaboration with Rethink Ireland, to examine the need for a discrete legal form for social enterprise based on an objective analysis of the challenges and opportunities they face. This research consisted of a survey of social enterprises and a set of semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of stakeholders from the social enterprise ecosystem in order to gather a broad grassroots perspective on the experiences of existing legal forms. A report detailing the findings of this research has been drafted and is to be published in 2021.

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b89d8-trustlaw-guide-social-enterprises-in-ireland/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/ga/foilsuichan/e2ed8-treoir-trustlaw-fointar-shoisialta-in-eirinn/>

Case Study 3 - G.I.Y – Grow It Yourself

GIY is a leading social enterprise, founded in 2008, supporting people to live healthier, happier & more sustainable lives by growing some of their own food.

Address: Grow HQ, Farronshoneen, Dunmore Road, Waterford City X91 NX30



Motivation for establishing the Social Enterprise

In Ireland over 90% of fruit and vegetables consumed are imported, two-thirds of which could be grown here. Michael Kelly worked in the IT business for ten years, but his life changed the day he noticed that a bulb of garlic he was about to buy in his local supermarket was imported from China.

He established a “GIY group” locally so he could meet and learn from other amateur food growers. In 2009 he founded GIY to inspire and support others to grow their own food. Research shows that food growers have better diets and eating habits; show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition; recycle and compost more, and waste less food.

Services and Goods provided

GROW HQ Award-winning zero waste café and food education centre at GROW HQ in Waterford, the Irish hub for the UN Chefs’ Manifesto programme and filming location for the RTÉ ‘Grow Cook Eat’ TV series

Retail Products ranging from seeds to our GROW box range of sustainable Irish products.

GIY@Work – fees are charged to implement corporate wellness programmes, training employees to grow food at work as a lever to a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

GIY has engaged with over 1 Million school children, 1,100 community groups and over 70,000 visitors to GROW HQ each year, promoting a better understanding of the connections between food & health, highlighting the key role that freshly grown, local food can deliver to individuals & to the planet.

Age of Enterprise: 12 years
Income Range: €1 million plus
Employment Range: 30 +

4. Policy Objective Three - Achieving Better Policy Alignment

Interaction with national and international policies

Policy Measures

To support better policy alignment for social enterprises, the Government will:

- 20.** Develop a better understanding of the interaction between social enterprises and relevant policy areas across Government to achieve closer alignment with social enterprises and the potential contribution they can make to delivering on a range of policy objectives.
- 21.** Ensure, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, that Ireland engages closely on social enterprise policy developments at international level so that Ireland can influence international social enterprise policy and, where possible, that social enterprises can benefit from international networks and supports.
- 22.** Continue to contribute to the work of the British Irish Council in relation to social enterprise, through the Department of Rural and Community Development.

DRCDC pursued a proactive engagement effort with other Governmental Departments to highlight the role played by social enterprises in delivering on Government policy in areas such as job creation, health, education, environment and circular economy, and COVID-19 responses. Examples include, contributing to the SME Taskforce's Growth Plan published by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, the 'Working to Change' Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021 – 2023 from the Department for Justice,⁸ and the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications amongst others.

DRCDC represents the Irish Government on the EU Expert Group on Social Enterprise (GECES), which provides a platform for engagement with EU policy developments regarding social enterprise. Other EU support programmes in which DRCDC is working to ensure social enterprise is considered include the recovery and resilience facilities, the social window of the InvestEU programme, and the forthcoming ESF+ to support social enterprises and social innovation.

DRCDC contributed to a needs analysis commissioned to underpin the development of a Partnership Agreement in relation to the ERDF 2021-2027. This highlighted the cross-sectoral

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/76b9e-working-to-change-social-enterprise-and-employment-strategy-2021-2023/>

scope of social enterprise, which makes it particularly suitable to ERDF (and ESF+) programme investment.

A major milestone took place in December 2020 when Ireland signed the Toledo Declaration on *'The Social and Solidarity Economy as a key driver for an inclusive and sustainable future'* as part of a high-level meeting on the social and solidary economy in the EU. The Declaration, adopted by 19 member states, is a recognition and a commitment to strengthening the decisive role that social enterprises can play as the EU emerges from the health, economic, and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasises the role social enterprises can play in fostering an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Beyond the EU, DRCD actively engages with other international platforms such as the British Irish Council (BIC), International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations (UN) on matters linked to social economy and social enterprise including on relevant topics such as cooperatives, social rights and sustainable development.

There are significant opportunities being explored to enhance North-South collaboration in the area of social enterprise, with ongoing contact and collaboration between North-South Government counterparts and social enterprise stakeholders. The Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI) Chairperson John McMullan addressed the National Social Enterprise Conference in 2019 and similarly, DRCD delivered a keynote speech at the 2020 SENI Conference. In addition, DRCD has participated in the All Party Group on Social Enterprise at the Stormont Assembly and has actively engaged in the development of the Peace+ programme.

Data and Impact

Policy Measures

To improve data on social enterprises, the Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, will:

23. Improve data collection relating to the extent of social enterprise in Ireland and the areas in which social enterprises operate.
24. Develop mechanisms to measure the social and economic impact of social enterprises across the full spectrum of social enterprise.

DRCD engaged Benefacts in early 2020 to provide a dataset in support of DRCD's work in carrying out preliminary research on Social Enterprise in Ireland. This exercise, which mostly focussed on Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLGs), highlighted the challenges associated with establishing reliable metrics regarding the scale of social enterprise activity in Ireland. Though it did not provide a complete picture of social enterprise in Ireland, it was beneficial in uncovering a variety of difficulties associated with social enterprise data collection, including visibility of traded income in published accounts. As such it highlighted key elements which must be considered when designing an effective and rigorous approach to data collection going forward, which will be a prerequisite for longer term policy action in the social enterprise arena.

Significant progress was made on developing a concept paper relating to a data collection exercise of social enterprise in Ireland. Drawing on the experience of national practitioners and international best practice, as well as inspiration from the mapping exercises that have been carried out regionally in Ireland, this paper will form the basis of a scoping phase which will seek input from a wide range of stakeholders including the Implementation Group. Developing an effective approach for this data collection exercise must be methodologically robust, but critically requires the full support and buy-in of the whole spectrum of social enterprise stakeholders in Ireland. The value of data collection as an essential policy tool for the government to respond to sectoral needs must be communicated and recognised. The intention is to progress this work further in 2021.

To support research in the area of social enterprise and to advance understanding of the impact social enterprises in Ireland, DRCD, in partnership with the Irish Research Council (IRC), launched a 2 year Post-Doctoral Social Enterprise Impact fellowship. There were no successful applicants in 2019, but the Impact Fellowship was re-run in 2020 with wider range of disciplines included, accompanied by a greater degree of promotion. An outcome of this process is expected in 2021.

To deliver on the implementation of this Policy, the Government will:

- 25.** Establish a National social enterprise Policy Implementation Group, chaired by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with representation from other relevant Government Departments, public bodies and social enterprise stakeholders.
- 26.** Publish annual updates on the implementation of this policy through the Department of Rural and Community Development, following consideration by the National social enterprise Policy Implementation Group.

In September 2019, the Minister for Rural and Community Development approved the establishment of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group which advises and oversees implementation of the policy and receives regular updates from the Department. Relevant Government Departments, public bodies, as well as key stakeholders participate, and the Group has met four times as at 31 December 2020. Minutes of the Implementation group meetings are publicly available for consideration on the gov.ie website.⁹ A full list of members of the Implementation Group, including the term of their participation is provided at Appendix 1. Membership of the Group was updated in October 2020 to ensure appropriately balanced representation. In addition, a Sub-Group of the Implementation Group was established in May 2020 with the specific objective of developing an Awareness Strategy. The Group met five times and its minutes are available on the gov.ie website.¹⁰ The Sub-Group's membership was decided upon by the Implementation Group, with members drawn from both the Implementation Group and external social enterprise stakeholders with relevant expertise. Membership details of the Sub-Group can be found in Appendix 2.

In relation to Policy Measure 26, this document serves as the first published annual update on the National Social Enterprise Policy.

⁹<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/f1f28-summary-minutes-of-national-social-enterprise-policy-implementation-group-nsepig-meetings/>

¹⁰<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/c1792-summary-minutes-of-awareness-strategy-sub-group-assg-meetings/>

Appendix 1 – Membership of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group as at 31 December 2020¹¹

1.	Department of Rural and Community Development (Chair)	Dr Andrew Forde, Principal Officer
2.	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Michael Clifford, Assistant Principal Officer
3.	Department of Justice	Therese Molyneux, Assistant Principal Officer, Criminal Justice Policy
4.	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	Gillian Devers (replaced Lucy Pyne)
5.	County and City Management Association (CCMA)	Mary MacSweeney, Deputy Head of Economic Development and Enterprise, Dublin City Council
6.	Pobal	Richard Deane, Head of Programme Planning and Development
7.	Social Enterprise Support Organisation	Brendan Whelan, CEO, Social Finance Foundation
8.	Social Enterprise Support Organisation	Eoghan Ryan, Rethink Ireland (Replaced John Evoy)
9. A	Social Enterprise Support Organisation	Dr Senan Cooke (until September 2020))
9. B	Social Enterprise Support Organisation	Chris Gordon, CEO, Irish Social Enterprise Network
10.	Social Enterprise C&V Pillar nominee	Ivan Cooper, Director of Policy, The Wheel
11.	Social Enterprise C&V Pillar nominee	Bríd O’Brien, Head of Policy, Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed
12.	Social Enterprise Stakeholder	Tammy Darcy, CEO, The Shona Project
13.	Social Enterprise Stakeholder	Rónán Ó Dálaigh, CEO, SEDCo/Thriftify
14.	Higher Education Institution	Prof Deiric O’Broin, Head of Social Enterprise, Dublin City University
15.	Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)	Larry O’Neill, South Dublin County Partnership

¹¹ Note: All members of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group are appointed by the Minister for Rural and Community Development for the term of the National Social Enterprise Policy with a view to representing the interests of Social Enterprises. They are not remunerated. The Minister reserves the right to adjust the composition of the Group from time to time to maintain the maximum representation of the diversity of stakeholder interests on the group.

Appendix 2 – Membership of the Awareness Raising Sub-Group¹²

1.	Tammy Darcy (Chair)	The Shona Project / Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland
2.	Ivan Cooper	The Wheel
3.	Richard Deane	Pobal
4.	Rónán Ó Dálaigh	Social Enterprise Development Co
5.	Brendan Whelan	Social Finance Foundation
6.	Claire Downey	Community Resources Network Ireland
7.	John Gallagher	JG Consulting
8.	Caroline Gardner	Quality Matters
9.	Chris Gordon	Irish Social Enterprise Network (ISEN)
10.	Darren Ryan	Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI)
11.	Clodagh O'Reilly	ReCreate
12.	Gerard Doyle	Technological University Dublin (until September 2020)
13.	Richard Gavin	Department of Rural and Community Development

¹² Note: All members of the Awareness Raising Subgroup are approved by the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group for the specific purposes of delivering on the Terms of Reference of the Subgroup. They are not remunerated.

